



## Receiving the Gift of Grace

Grace... It's more than a pretty name for a girl. It's more than just a few words spoken before partaking of a meal. It's even more than the manner in which figure skaters glide to gold in Olympic competition. Grace above all else is that unmerited favor of God toward sinful man! God, Who is pure and good, and in Whom there is no darkness or tolerance for evil, offers His grace to those who will accept it. As with many doctrines in scripture, grace has fallen victim to the abuses and opinions of man. There have been those who have viewed the grace of God as having no conditions, that all are recipients of it, while others have added conditions God has not cited.

When the people of Israel were convicted of their sin in putting to death the One God had made both Lord and Christ, they immediately cried out in alarm, seeking to know what to do. Peter wasted no time, instructing them (as directed by the Spirit of God) "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38) No matter how you look at this passage, it cannot be ignored that God's word calls for a specific response for those turning to Him for His grace. This is consistent with David's understanding of God when he wrote "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps 51:17 NAS) Today, many expect to receive the "free gift of God" (Romans 6:23) without coming to God on His terms, that is without a repentant and contrite heart. This is applicable to both extremes, those who have made conditions that God did not set and those who have removed the ones He did specify. Only you know the condition of your heart, how you feel about your sin and God's answer for it. Under the old covenant, seekers of forgiveness brought animal sacrifices before the Lord. This is no longer required because God gave us 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. This is the grace of God, something He offered freely to those seeking eternal life. The recipient of that grace will respond as he or she ought to... (Luke 17:10). Grace is offered to all, but seemingly will be received by few (Matthew 7:14).